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We Suggest

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WE SUGGEST

Eleanor Buelke

Mazurkiewicz, Albert J., Editor
New Perspectives In Reading Instruction
New York: Pitman Publishing Corporation
1964, Pp. xviii 574.

In a recent article, "Why I Am Not Going To The Moon," J. W. Krutch makes the statement that, in science, ". . . many of the ends we pursue cannot be justified except by saying that, after all, these things can be done and these ends can be pursued."¹ *New Perspectives In Reading Instruction* is an impressive and intriguing presentation of things that can be done and ends that can be pursued in the teaching of reading. The editor, Dr. Mazurkiewicz, has had excellent experiential background and wide contact and confrontation with people and problems in this area. Contributors to this anthology represent faculties of teacher training institutions and liberal arts colleges; classroom teachers, supervisors, and administrators of public schools; teachers in private schools; experts in educational research; writers from the contemporary literary world; and advisors in local, state, and federal educational affairs.

Readings in this book are organized in twelve parts. Part One concerns the present state of reading instruction. Part Two examines linguistic bases and complex aspects of the reading process. It also establishes the relationship of this process to reading instruction and to the total curriculum. Parts Three through Eleven present varied opinions on major areas of concern in reading instruction. Some of these readings are disputive and controversial; some are supportive and reciprocal; some are objective and practical. Part Twelve reviews various instructional procedures which have provoked interest and inquiry in recent years. Ideas inherent in these methods merit consideration because of their influence upon the direction taken by current literature and practices concerning the teaching of reading. Part Thirteen summarizes findings, implications, and recommendations of the vast body of research about reading. Positions taken in this section suggest both strengths and limitations in this area of experimentation and measurement.

This book offers much of value for instructors in teacher education,

1. Krutch, J. W. "Why I Am Not Going To The Moon." *Saturday Review*, XLVIII (November 20, 1965), 29-31.

for experienced classroom teachers, and for those preparing to teach. The key word, “perspectives,” in the book’s title can also become the key word to its value and utility. Some precise study and creative thinking about this word leads to discovery of its possible, varied meanings. Literally, a perspective can be different things: a device that shows objects in the right position; one of various devices for producing a fantastic effect or optical illusion; a picture, or figure, that looks distorted except when viewed from some particular point; or viewing things in their true relations, relative importance, or in the proper pattern of relationships as to value, importance, or other basic quality. Conceptually, the philosophies and practices emphasized and explained here can be utilized in different ways. Sporadic reading of certain sections alone, or spot reference to particular points only, can lead to distorted, perhaps prejudiced, interpretation, and implementation. Thorough reading of the book in its entirety can serve to place emerging trends in contemporary reading instruction in their proper pattern of relationships to the nature of the reading act, to instructional goals for our schools, and to valid findings in basic, scientific research.

If, indeed, as Lorene Fox suggests in Part Seven, reading is a personal affair, and “much of the process simply has to go on inside the head of the person doing the reading,” then, conceptualization by the reader can affect, actually create, his perspective. Through use of an italicized foreword at the beginning of each reading, but, without intrusion in the reader’s “personal affair,” the editor subtly helps one to view each article in its relative importance to the subject of reading.

For some who read the book, a portion of the content may seem so familiar that it bores, or fatigues. For some, part of the content may seem so new that it disturbs, or threatens. For all professional readers, it is possible that there may be sections, such as those dealing with “The Nature of Reading” and “Comprehension: Thinking,” that stimulate thinking and provoke ideation toward their own new perspectives in reading instruction. Thus, may educators do the “things that can be done” and “pursue the ends that can be pursued”—with justification.